



JIM GIBBONS  
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING AND POLICY  
1100 E. William Street, Suite 116  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

MICHAEL J. WILLDEN  
*Director*

CHARLES DUARTE  
*Administrator*

September 10, 2009

David Blumenthal MD, MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Blumenthal,

Please accept this letter from Nevada Information Community Health Exchange (NICHE) as an indication of our intent to apply for a grant to develop a State Plan during the life of this cooperative agreement for the promotion of health information technology for the State of Nevada.

We will apply for planning funds under the following number and funding opportunity title:

Number: EP-HIT-09-001

Title: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, State Grants to Promote Health Information Technology Planning and Implementation Projects

The primary Point of Contact is:

Charles Duarte, Division Administrator,  
Division of Health Care Financing & Policy  
1100 E. William St., Suite 101, Carson City, Nevada 89701, (775) 684-3677,  
[cduarte@dhcfp.nv.gov](mailto:cduarte@dhcfp.nv.gov)

Other key personnel will include:

Ernesto Hernandez, IT Manager, Department of Health and Human Services,  
(775) 684-5923, [ehernandez@health.nv.gov](mailto:ehernandez@health.nv.gov)

Mel Rosenberg, IT Manager, Division of Health Care Financing & Policy,  
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Shawna DeRousse, Administrative Services Officer,  
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Peggy Martin, Management Analyst, Division of Health Care Financing & Policy,  
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Theresa Presley, IT Professional, Health Division,  
(775) 684-4110, tpresley@health.nv.gov

We have a broad base of stakeholders in the NICHE which include:

HealthInsight (Nevada)  
Nevada Rural Hospital Partners (NRHP)  
University of Nevada  
United Healthcare, Nevada market  
Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition  
Nevada Health Information Management Services Society (HIMSS)  
Renown Health  
Hospital Corporation of America  
Nevada Health Centers  
Culinary Health Fund  
University Medical Center of Southern Nevada  
Nevada Hospital Association  
Health Access Washoe County (HAWC)  
Nevada Health Care Forum  
Nevada Chapter of Medical Group Management Association  
Nevada Chapter of Healthcare Financial Management Association  
Nevada Chapter of American College of Healthcare Executives

We will not be applying for funding for a Regional Center.

We are very pleased with our progress in the Health Information Exchange (HIE) capacity domains and further intend to leverage existing efforts from our stakeholders to advance health information exchange in the State of Nevada as indicated by the following:

#### Legal and Policy Capacity

The State of Nevada recently passed groundbreaking legislation regarding the protection of personal information. Nevada Revised Statutes 603A has been revised by Senate Bill 227 mandating encryption of personal information. The Office of Information Security in support of this legislation and their mission of secure data exchange is implementing state of the art audit and encryption tools.

#### Governance Capacity

The State of Nevada has initiated the conversation with healthcare providers, payers and interested parties regarding health information exchange. The Governor has sought and received funds through the Nevada Legislature's Interim Finance Committee for an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Director and executive assistant. The Director of the Department Health and Human Services has sought and received funding for a HIT / HIE Project Manager. Governor Jim Gibbons will issue an executive order creating the Nevada Health Information Technology Blue Ribbon Task Force to provide advice and guidance on the planning and adoption of a statewide health information exchange. The panel, comprised of diverse stakeholders and industry leaders, will review laws, regulations, policies, governance and financing issues related to the

adoption of Health Information Technology in Nevada, and will make recommendations to the Governor and other state leaders.

Business and Technical Operations Capacity

The business and technical operations capacity is illustrated by the strategic innovations of four of our principle stakeholders: (1) HealthInsight; (2) Nevada Rural Hospital Partners; (3) University of Nevada; and, (4) United Healthcare.

(1) HealthInsight, through the CMS Doctors office Quality - Information Technology (DOQ-IT) contract in Nevada's QIO 8th Scope of Work, (August 2005-July 2008), promoted more reliable delivery of preventive services and the effective management of patients with chronic diseases through the adoption, implementation, and effective use of health information technology in conjunction with redesigned patient care processes. They have worked with primary care clinics to help them prepare for, choose, implement, and use electronic health records to improve care.

(2) Nevada Rural Hospital Partners (NRHP) is a voluntary consortium of 14 of Nevada's 15 small, rural, and frontier hospitals serving approximately 350,000 constituents in a geographic area encompassing 91,000 square miles.

Through a HRSA grant in 2003 they initiated integration between 24 different hospital systems at 8 facilities and processes approximately 7 million messages per month. They continue to develop this model by expanding a state wide rural teleradiology network. Their Diagnostic Imaging Solution for Rural Nevada archive supports HIPAA regulations by providing off-site storage of radiology images and processes approximately 275,000 images monthly.

(3) University of Nevada (UN),

- i. The Nevada Center for Health Statistics and Informatics provides technical capacity and collaborative opportunities for researchers and health professionals in Nevada. Projects the Center conducted include "Improvement of Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program through enhancing the health informatics capacity", "Analysis and linkages among early intervention services", "Built Environment (database linkages) and Spatial Analysis on Obesity", "Statewide autism databases linkages", "Cancer registry analysis", "Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Systems (BRFSS)" and "Analysis between prenatal care cost and health outcomes".
- ii. The UN Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) has developed an extensive database of all inpatient hospital medical claims for Nevada hospitals spanning more than a decade. CHIA is strategically positioned to provide a repository of all claims for licensed ambulatory surgery centers and outpatient hospital facilities. It is developing web-based quality reporting capabilities for hospital and outpatient services based on these data sets. It makes specific Nevada hospital related data available to both the private and public sectors.
- iii. The UN School of Medicine's (UNSOM) efforts for HIE and EHR are tied together as Electronic Health Record (EHR) implementation, the platform

upon which HIE will emanate. UNSOM has worked toward the implementation of a Statewide EHR since 2004 and has operated an established EHR within the Mojave Mental Health practice for several years. UNSOM in partnership with Renown Health, a major community hospital in Northern Nevada, has resulted in a pilot of a complete EHR (EMR and Practice Management) system.

- iv. The UN School of Dental Medicine was designed with capacity for utilization of an advanced technological curriculum and patient care clinic. They operate in a paperless clinic environment which includes an electronic clinic management system, digital radiology, and electronic textbooks. The investment in the information technology system has allowed them to prepare healthcare professionals in the use of information technologies.

(4) United Healthcare Nevada Market - (formerly Sierra Health Services) is a diversified healthcare company with both insurance and healthcare delivery capabilities. Through its subsidiaries (Health Plan of Nevada and Southwest Medical Associates) it has implemented and supported: A fully electronic medical record utilized throughout Southwest Medical Associates supporting 200+ providers in 14 locations in Clark County; a state-wide sponsorship of e-prescribing software in conjunction with the Clark County Medical Society and Allscripts; a web-based facility to allow contracted providers in the Health Plan of Nevada provider network to submit and receive electronic patient referrals within the network; web-based portals for both providers and patients to enable their online access to insurance benefit and eligibility information, claims information, prior authorization and referral information plus medical record data; and a Portable Medical Record that provides a secure link to current patient medical record information on a mini-diskette that can be carried in a patient's wallet or purse.

#### Technical Infrastructure

The State of Nevada has spent significant effort and money in data communication infrastructure. We continue to expand connectivity and increase capacity throughout the state and especially within the rural communities to serve the needs of its citizens.

Nevada Medicaid and the Nevada Check Up Program (Nevada's Children's Health Insurance Program) offers providers electronic tools, including e-Prescribing, to save valuable time, build staff efficiency and enhance the safety of the prescribing process with an electronic prescribing connection with pharmacies. The computer-to-computer process is safer and more secure for recipients, prescribers and pharmacies, because paper faxes are eliminated.

The Division of Health Care Financing & Policy, as part of an upcoming procurement, intends to add the requirement for the successful proposer to provide an HIE that may be used by all Medicaid providers. It is also intended to integrate clinical data and claims history from multiple data sources making this available through an HIE.

#### Financial Capacity

HealthInsight has spent approximately \$ 1,564,909 to help physicians adopt and use electronic health records to improve care.

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The State of Nevada has spent over \$ 6.9 million in data communication infrastructure over the last five years.

Funding has been demonstrated in the specifics provided in the previous domains both within the State of Nevada government and its' stakeholders.

NICHE is also focused on becoming a principal element in the development of health information exchanges between states and eventually a national information technology program.

NICHE will be specifically focused on the interest of the public we serve to create an inclusive health information sharing community to:

- Improve patient safety through informed decisions based on patient's medical history
- Improve the efficiency of health care delivery, by allowing providers to make informed decisions based on more effective information access
- Improve the quality of patient care providing information on evidence-based patient information
- Help reduce the costs of services delivery by increasing the effectiveness of health care delivery in our state

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this Letter of Intent to participate in the State Grants to Promote Health Information Technology Planning and Implementation Projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Duarte".

Charles Duarte  
Administrator

